

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Please amend claim 14 as follows:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1.-13. (Cancelled).

14. (Currently Amended) A method for pressing a ceramic stacked layer structure, comprising the steps of:

laterally [[positioning]] holding sidewalls of a die at a predetermined position on a die base using a plurality of thrust mechanisms, wherein the die has a bottom plate and the sidewalls forming a recess for receiving the ceramic layered structure; and

vertically pressing the ceramic layered structure in the recess between the bottom plate and a top die and while applying lateral force via the plurality of thrust mechanisms on outer faces of the sidewalls in horizontal directions toward the recess.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the thrust mechanisms are attached to the die base.

16. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the bottom plate and sidewalls are discrete components.

17. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the bottom plate and the sidewalls are integral.

18. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising the steps of:
placing the stacked layer structure into the recess in the die; and
transporting the die with the stacked layer structure in the recess to the die base.

19. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein said plurality of thrust mechanisms comprise four thrust mechanisms.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the ceramic layered structure is pressed in the recess between the bottom plate and the top die and the lateral force is applied via the plurality of thrust mechanisms on outer faces of the sidewalls in directions toward the recess simultaneously.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the bottom plate includes a step formed at its periphery, and the sidewalls are fitted to the step.